

REMARKS

Status of the Application & Formalities

Claim Status

Claims 1-21 are all the claims pending in the application. By this Amendment, Applicants are amending claims 1, 8, 16, and 19, and canceling dependent claims 2 and 4.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claim 19 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite to failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention.

Claim 19 is being amended to address the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-3, 5-9, 11, 12, 16-18, 20 and 21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Meehan (US 4,998,621).

Independent claim 1 is being amended to incorporate the subject matter of dependent claim 4. As such, the rejection of independent claim 1 is now moot.

Claims 2-3, 5-9, 11, and 12 are allowable at least by virtue of their dependency from independent claim 1.

Independent claim 16 has been amended to incorporate subject matter similar to that of original claim 4.

Claims 17, 18, 20, and 21 are allowable at least by virtue of their dependency from independent claim 1.

Claims 1-4, 7, 9-12 and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Thomas (US 3,942,667).

Independent claim 1 is being amended to incorporate subject matter similar to that of dependent claim 8. As such, the rejection of independent claim 1 is now moot.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-3, 5-7, 9, 11 and 12-15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Saujet (US 4,371,087).

Independent claim 1 is being amended to incorporate the subject matter of dependent claim 4. As such, the rejection of independent claim 1 is now moot.

Claim 19 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Meehan in view of Duquet et al. (US 6,811,057).

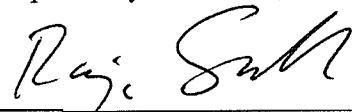
Claim 19 is allowable at least by virtue of its dependent from independent claim 16.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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